



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

January 31, 2007

Fact Sheet

BUILDING AN IMMIGRATION SERVICE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is proposing a new fee structure that ensures appropriate funding to meet customer service needs and national security requirements, and modernizes an outdated business infrastructure. The proposed new fee structure is built around a foundation of strategic pillars designed to enhance and sustain a secure and efficient immigration system. Those pillars are, *Improving Service Delivery*, *Enhancing the Security and Integrity of the Immigration System*, and *Modernizing Business Infrastructure*.

Improving Service Delivery – USCIS is fundamentally transforming the delivery of immigration services while continuing to process approximately seven million applications and petitions each year. Considerable progress has been made in improving customer service, such as eliminating the application backlog and enhanced anti-fraud initiatives. The revenue from a new fee structure, if implemented in full this summer, will also:

- Reduce average application processing times by 20 percent from the current six month standard by the end of fiscal year 2009
- Cut processing times by the end of fiscal year 2008 for four key application types that represent a third of all applications filed
- Improve processing times from six to four months for the I-90 (Renew / Replace Permanent Resident Card), I-140 (Immigration Petition for Alien Worker) and I-485 (Adjustment of Status to Permanent Resident)
- Improve the processing time for the N-400 (Naturalization) from seven to five months
- Transform the current paper-based data systems into a modern digital processing platform
- Expand on-line services, including e-filing capabilities to both citizenship and immigrant related requests; culminating with start-to-finish electronic processing
- Ensure a high-performance workforce through a national recruitment program, including new retention and training programs
- Improve the Freedom of Information Act program by hiring and training additional staff, resulting in the elimination of backlogs and faster processing
- Exempt applicants for humanitarian reasons from paying a fee from certain initial applications for benefits, including asylum, T-Nonimmigrant Status (I-914) – Victims of Human Trafficking), and applicants seeking immigrant classification under the Violence Against Women Act
- Improve USCIS facilities

Enhancing the Security and Integrity of the Immigration System – USCIS plays a vital role in our nation's security. It is incumbent upon USCIS to make certain that a fair and equitable immigration system will not compromise public safety and national security. Additional and significant improvements are needed to meet current and emerging threats to the integrity of the immigration system. They include:

- Improving the timeliness of background checks by expanding current name check resolution capacity, establishing co-located name check resolution capacity, and fully funding the FBI background check process
- Enhancing capability for the Fraud Detection and National Security Unit to conduct studies to determine the nature and extent of fraud in additional immigration benefit categories and to develop and implement solutions to mitigate identified vulnerabilities
- Implementing an aggressive site inspection and verification program aimed at identifying fraud among high-risk applications and petitions.

Modernizing Business Infrastructure – USCIS must also modernize its business systems and infrastructure in order to improve overall service delivery. Modernization plans will establish an integrated technology platform that supports the agency, its stakeholders, and its customers. Plans include:

- Upgrading the IT operating environment for desktop computers and transitioning to the department's standard operating system
- Improving and automating business operations thereby reducing the existing paper-based processes and the underlying antiquated technology
- Enhancing the electronic transfer and information sharing of immigration records through increased digitization, such as electronic on-demand interagency sharing of immigration records
- Replacing and consolidated legacy INS systems